

FRIENDS OF

MAXX

TM

FOR
MATURE
READERS

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GOODY,
A COMIC THAT HAS THE GUTS
TO BE ABOUT PHYSICAL JEOPARDY
INSTEAD OF THAT TYPICAL EMOTIONAL
JEOPARDY CRAP!

image® COMICS PRESENTS:

FRIENDS OF



FEATURING

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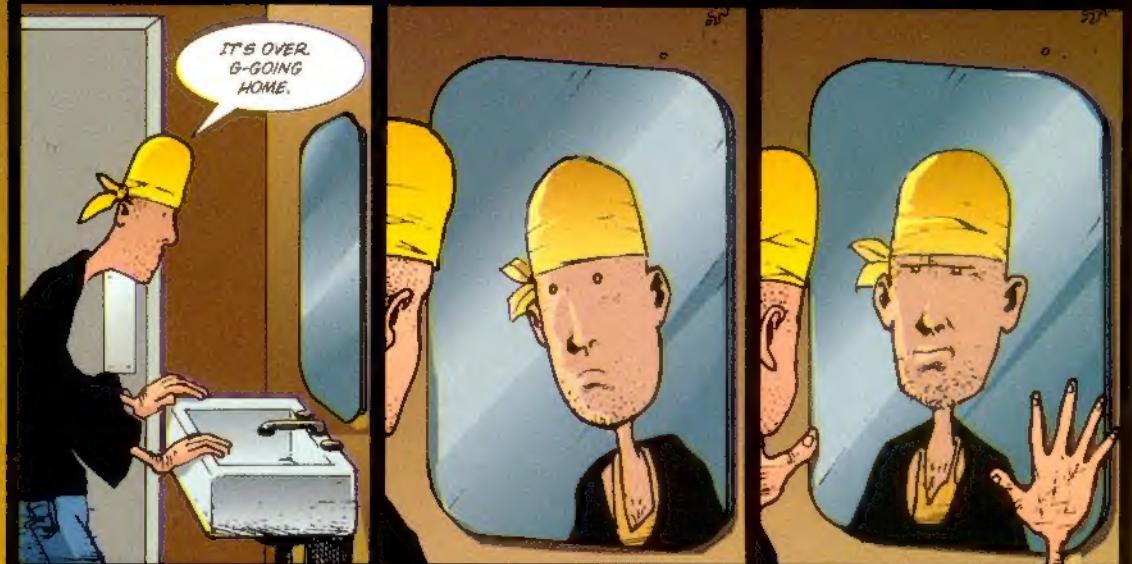
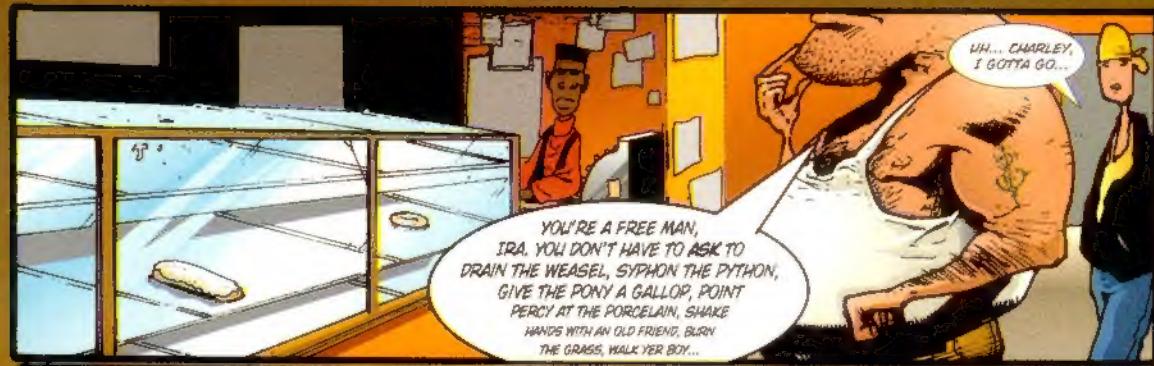
PRINTED IN CANADA.





Broadminded=
Spelled SIN





8-11

MINI-MART

LATER THAT NIGHT...

NOW HOLD
MY FRUITY BAR UP, N' DON'T
DROP IT, AND TURN OFF THAT
GAWD-AWFUL
MUSIC OF YOURS!

BUT I LIKE
COLE PORTER
AND WEEN.

MAN, THAT BUGS ME.
THIS MOLDING JUST
WON'T STAY...

THE KEYS, NOW! AND
GET OUT OR YOU'RE DEAD!
NOW, DON'T MOVE!

WHERE'S THE
GAWD-DANGED
CAR?!

YOU
SAVED THE @#%!!
FRUITY BAR BUT YOU
LET HIM TAKE THE
@#% CAR!?

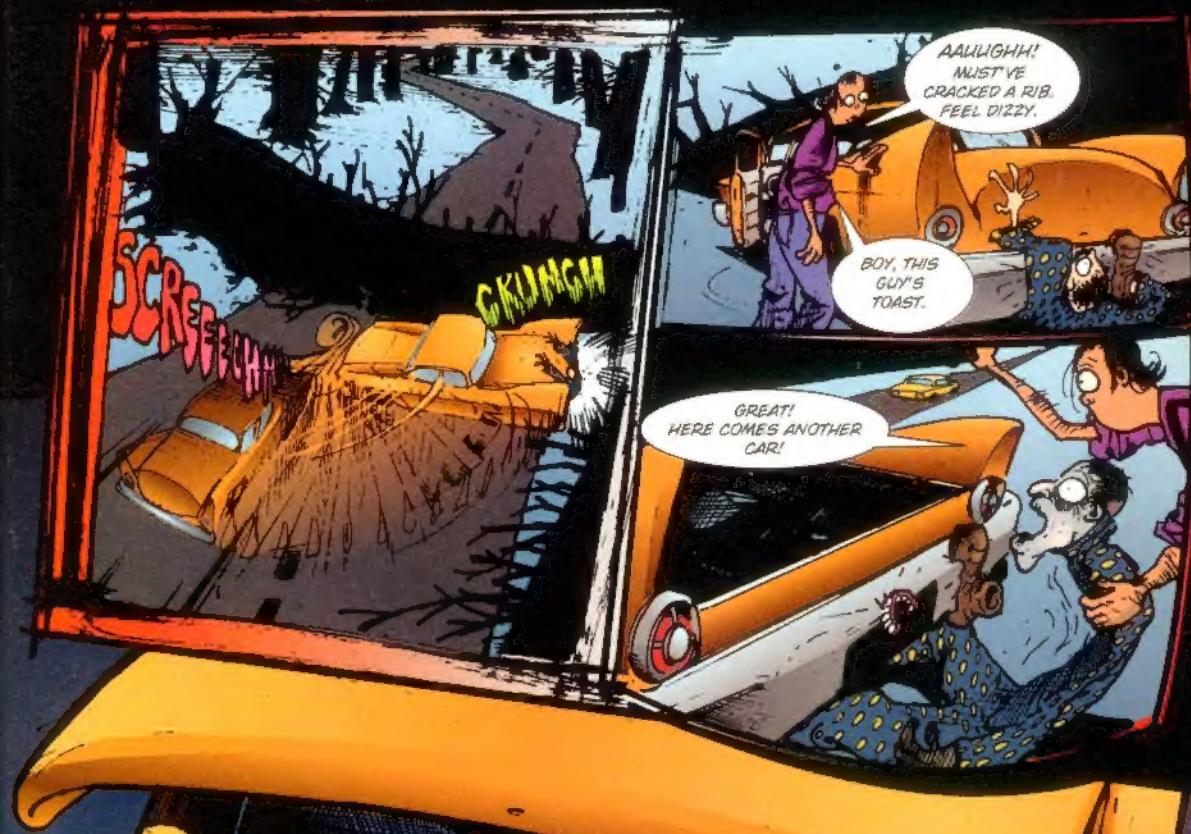
WE WAS
CARJACKED.

BUT I SAVED
YOUR FRUITY...

SORRY,
CHARLEY,
I SCREWED UP.
I SHOULD'VE....

QUIT YER
BELLY ACHIN'. REAL
MEN DON'T GET KILLED
OVER A CAR, LOOK
WE GOTTA CALL
THE COPS.







LATER...

SO ROBERT BLY SAID ANYTHING THAT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE WE PUT INTO THIS BAG WHICH WE DRAG BEHIND US. IT'S JUST LIKE JUNG'S SHADOW. WE SPEND THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS DECIDING WHAT TO PUT IN OUR BAG, AND THE REST OF OUR LIVES TRYING TO GET STUFF OUT.

YOU ALREADY SAID THAT.

OH YEAH.



NOW, ALL A MAN NEEDS IN LIFE IS THE "THREE PEES." LIVE BY 'EM AND THEY'RE YOUR FRIENDS FOR LIFE! BUT RUN FROM 'EM AND BOY THOSE PEES WILL EAT YOU ALIVE! THE THREE THINGS A MAN MUST LEARN ARE TO PROVIDE, PROTECT AND PARK THE PINK CADILLAC.

PINK CADILLAC--

YOU KNOW, PLOOK, PLUG, PLOUGH, NOOKY!

"PLOOK." YES, OF COURSE. SO YOUR CRITERIA FOR BEING A MAN IS ONLY EXTERNAL PHYSICAL ATTR...

CHARLEY
LOOK, IF YOU'RE GONNA LEARN TO BE A MAN LIKE A DETACHED SCIENTIST, IT WON'T HAPPEN! BEING A MAN IS VISCERAL-

YOU CAN'T THINK IT - YOU HAVE TO FEEL IT! YOU MUST RISK, AND COMPETE, AND BE TESTED UNTIL YOU FINALLY ACHIEVE SOMETHING. BEING A MAN IS KICKIN' ASS AND TAKIN' NO CRAP!

PEE #1.
PROVIDING.
FIND SOMETHING YOU CAN DO FOR A LIVING. THAT WAY, YOU CAN USE THE MONEY, CAR, HOUSE AND OTHER TOYS YOU EARN TO LURE FEMALES INTO OUR HERD. I KNOW, YOU SHOULDN'T "HAVE TO" IN AN IDEAL WORLD, BUT THERE IT IS. THE ENEMY OF PROVIDING IS.... MAYBE I CAN FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO PROVIDE FOR ME. THE STATE, SOME SHELTER OR LIVE OFF MY GIRLFRIEND OR PARENTS... THAT'S BROADMINDED THINKIN'!

THE #2 PEE IS PLOOKIN. NOW, PINKO LIBERALS AND FEMINISTS WILL TRY TO SAP YOUR VITAL FLUIDS! DON'T LET 'EM! WHY'D YOU THINK ATHLETES ARE TOLD NOT TO POP A LOAD BEFORE A GAME?!? IT'S THE SEED. IT'S MAGIC. SAVE IT FOR STRATEGIC MOMENTS. REPRODUCE YOURSELF = GO FORTH AND PLOOK!

IT'S THE SEED. IT'S MAGIC. SAVE IT FOR STRATEGIC MOMENTS! PEE #3 PROTECT. THIS IS YOUR TERRITORY. YOU MARK IT AND DEFEND IT. WHETHER IT BE YOUR BODY, YOUR PARKING SPOT, YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S HEADLIGHTS OR YOUR COUNTRY! STAND UP FOR YOURSELF IF YOU'RE THREATENED, AND IF YOU'RE TOO WEAK, GET OUTSIDE HELP, LIKE THE COPS OR A GUN OR A POODLE. BUT THE ENEMY OF ALL THREE PEES IS THINKIN' AND THAT'S WHY THIS BROADMINDED, ANYTHING GOES, TOUCHEE-FEELIE CRAP YOU READ IS SPELLED SIN IN MY BOOK.

CHARLEY'S DINER

NO. 1 OPEN

BUT CHARLEY
YOU REDUCE MEN TO PURE INSTINCTS.
I SEE THE MIND AS A GREAT BIRD, FLYING
HIGH ABOVE THE MATERIAL WORLD, AND OUT
INSTINCTS AS BUFFALO, ROAMING BELOW,
UNABLE TO SEE PAST BASER ACTS OF EATING
SLEEPING AND COUPULATING! YOU FEAR WHAT YOU
DON'T UNDERSTAND, SO YOU MAKE FUN OF
THOUGHT AND OPENMINDEDNESS. BUT ALL THE
EXTERNAL PEES YOU MENTION STILL WON'T MAKE
A MAN COMPLETE AND TODAY'S WOMEN WANT
A SENSITIVE GUY WHO CAN UNDERSTAND
THEIR FEELINGS. WOMEN WANT
THE BIRD CHARLEY
NOT A BUFFALO

BIRD AND BUFFALO, HUH?
YOU GET THAT FROM ONE OF YOUR
"BOOKS?" THE THING IS YOU GOT IT
BACKWARDS. ALL YOU ARE IS YOUR
ACTIONS WHICH ARE AS POWERFUL AS A
BUFFALO. IT EATS, PLOOKS AND SLEEPS, WHILE
THAT LITTLE YAPPY BIRD BRAIN OF YOURS SITS ON
THE BUFFALO'S BACK, TALKING RATIONALIZING AND
WASTING TIME YAP YAP YAP. EVERYTHING YOU'VE
JUST TOLD ME IS THE BIRD YAPPIN'! A MAN WATCHES
FOR WHAT THE BUFFALO DOES! WOMEN MAY SAY
THEY WANT "MR. SENSITIVE" BUT THAT'S JUST HER
BIRD TALKING-- HER BUFFALO JUST WANTS TO BE
PLOOKED, PROTECTED AND PROVIDED FOR! CRUDE,
BUT TRUE. SHE'LL YAP ALL DAY
LONG BOUT HOW MEN ARE SUPPOSED TO BE,
BUT THAT NIGHT IT'S THE BUFFALO
HUMAN INSTINCT THAT HITS
THE SINGLE'S BARS!



CHARLEY, YOU CAN'T JUST
BEAT UP EVERYONE WHO USES
THE "B-WORD"

IF YOU'RE PREPARED TO
LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING, KID! THOSE
PUNKS ARE LUCKY I CAME ALONG!
THOSE KIDS NEED TO BE REMINDED
THAT INSIDE OF EVERY LIBERAL IS
A CONSERVATIVE
TRYING TO GET OUT!

BUT...

NO BUTTS!
BUTTS ARE FOR BIRDS!
IGNORE YOUR BIRD,
FOR ONCE, AND FOLLOW
YOUR BUFFALO!
LET'S GO!

WHAT THE
#@@%#*

HOW'D THAT
GET THERE?!?!

SOMEBODY
MUST'VE HIT OUR
BUMPER WHILE
WE WERE
INSIDE

WITH THEIR SHOE?
USE YOUR HEAD!

WELL THIS GUY
USED HIS TEETH,
TOO.

THE SHOE DIDN'T
DENT THIS BUMPER,
IDOT IT JUST GOT
STUCK THERE.

BUT WHOSE
SHOES ARE THEY?

WHO CARES?
TAKE 'EM OUT!
LOOKIE
A PENNY!

THEY WON'T
BUDGE

THEN SCREW
'EM. IT'S NOT
LIKE ANYBODY
WILL



EXCUSE ME,
BUT IS THIS
SEAT TAKEN?

DEPENDS?
ARE YOU A NICE
SENSITIVE GUY LOOKING
FOR FRIENDSHIP, OR
A BRUTE WHO JUST
WANTS NOOKIES?

BOTH ACTUALLY,
UH I MEAN
ER, UH, WHICH
ONE GETS
ME A SEAT?

SMOOTH, YA KNOW,
FOR A "SENSITIVE-
BRUTE" YOU'RE NOT TOO
BRIGHT. I LIKE THAT IN A
GUY. WHAT'S
YOUR NAME?

IRA.

THERE
GO THE
CONDOMS!

EXPECTING A
BUSY NIGHT?

ANNIE,
SIT
DOWN.

NO HUMP
TOO BAD
I LIKE THAT
IN A GUY!
WHO
GOES AFTER
WHAT HE WANTS
MY OLD BOYFRIEND
WAS A WUSS WITH
A PIECE OF CRAP CAR
ALWAYS PRETENDING
TO BE COOL I HOPE
YOU'RE NOT
LIKE

THAT'S
MY CAR,
ACTUALLY!

THAT CHERRY
\$6 BUCKS?!?
COOL!!

YEAH, I JUST
GOT OUTTA
PRISON!

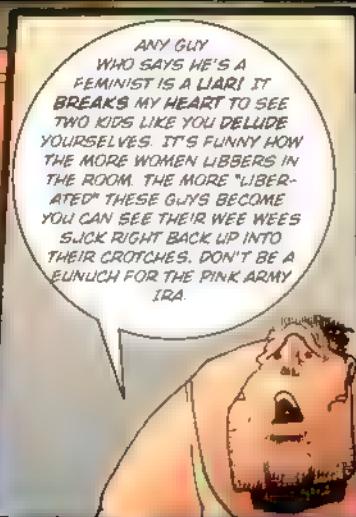
MURDER, KILLED
A GUY GUYS
REALLY

WOW
WHAT FOR?

NO
SH*T?

YEAH, ME N'
MY BUDDY ARE MAKIN'
OUR WAY CROSS COUNTRY,
RAISIN' HELL! BETTER
GET GOIN'

HOLD IT! YOU
SENSITIVE-BRUTE.
I'M GONNA BREAK
YOUR HEART, AND YOU'RE
GONNA THANK ME FOR IT.









SO, LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT THOUGH A GIRL SAYS SHE WANTS A SENSITIVE, LIBERAL MAN WHO'S A FEMINIST WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO CRY, SHE SECRETLY LONGS FOR A CONSERVATIVE JACKASS LIKE YOU?

LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY TO A CONSERVATIVE, EVERYDAY IS THE 4TH OF JULY TO A LIBERAL. EVERYDAY IS APRIL 15TH! YOU CAN T FIGHT NATURE BABE THE FEMALE MONKEY MAY LKE A MALE MONKEY WHO'S GENTLE WITH HER BABIES BUT IT'S THE MONKEY WITH THE BIGGEST POKER WHO'S GONNA STIR HER HONEY POT!

WHAT IS THIS GAWD-AWFUL MUSIC PLAYING?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

YOU'RE WRONG, CHARLEY, MONKEY'S AND TAXES ASIDE, WOMEN DO WANT A GUY WHO'S SENSITIVE AND UNAFRAID TO CRY. A REAL MAN WILL ATTRACT A WOMAN BECAUSE HE'S EVERYTHING YOU'RE NOT! GUYS LIKE IRA MAKE ME HOT!

YEAH, YEAH, THAT'S WHY ALL THE EGGHEADS AND ARTISTS GOT ALL THE GIRLS IN HIGH SCHOOL

I DATED AN ARTIST

SO DID I

YEAH BUT DID THEY GET LUCKY?

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT!

WHY DON'T YOU STAND UP TO HIM?

I CAN LEARN FROM HIM

ANNIE SAY SOMETHING!

I DON'T AGREE WITH EVERYTHING HE SAYS, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING.

YEAH, LIKE HOW TO BE A SIMIAN!

I HEARD THAT! I KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!

WOW I'M IMPRESSED.

HEY, LOOK WHAT I GOT

YOU CARRY A PEN IN YOUR SKIRT?

WHY LOOKIE! IT'S HARD! I MUST HAVE PEN-IS ENVY!

ANNIE, STOP FOOLING AROUND PUT THE LID ON





I SWEAR IRA TURN
THIS THING OF YOURS
DOWN OR I'LL RIP IT
RIGHT OUT!!!

DISTRACTIVE,
AIN'T SHE?

LOOKIE,
A BIRD

C'MERE, WE
GOTTA TALK.

YOU'RE
A DISGRACE TO THE ENTIRE
MALE RACE! SHE'S GOT YOU
P@#%Y WHIPPED AND JUMPIN'
THROUGH HOOPS!
AND WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO GET ANY!

BUT SEX ISN'T
EVERYTHING! GIRLS
LIKE GUYS, WHO
UNDERSTAND
EM

TELL THAT
TO 'CAPT STANDISH'
YOUR BAZOOKA OF LOVE,
DON'T YOU GET IT YET? SHE
DON'T RESPECT YOU! HOW
CAN SHE WHEN YOU KEEP
DOIN' HER EVERY
WHIM!!

I STILL
THINK...

THAT'S STILL
YOUR
PROBLEM!

THERE' NOW WHICH
ONE OF THESE
DISCONNECTS

HEY, CAREFUL
REEBY! YOU'LL
BREAK IT!

IRA, I'M PULLING
THE LINING OUT!
SEE?! WHATEVER
YOU GONNA DO?!

WHAT IN THE
SAM HILL IS
THIS!!!????!



BLOND CLUNK CLUNK



I AM,
I AM!!

PULLOVER
CHARLEY!!!









OKAY JUST
STAY CALM WHY
WOULD HE KNOW?
HE PROBABLY JUST
SAW OUR FLAT









HEY OFFICER
WE JUST MET
THESE GUYS
WE'RE NOT
"WITH" 'EM!!!

THAT'S RIGHT
WE DON'T
EVEN KNOW
'EM!!!

THE SKINNY
ONE'S A
MURDERER, FRESH
OUTTA PRIS---

ANNIE,
WILL YOU--

EVERYBODY,
SHUT-UP!!!

LOOK, YOU'RE RIGHT
IT'S A STOLEN CAR
BUT IT WAS STOLEN
FROM US!

YEAH LATER, WE FOUND
IT, AND I FORGOT TO TELL
YOU GUYS. I CAN PROVE
IT. HERE'S MY I.D.

THROW IT OVER,
SLOWLY....

HMM.

OHHHH-KAY
SORRY ABOUT THAT, BUT YOU
FELLAS REALLY SHOULD'VE CALLED IT
IN AND LET US KNOW YOU'D FOUND IT

WE'RE
SORRY.

20

YEAH,
REALLY

SO, WHAT'S
WITH THE
GIRL?

AWW IRA WILL
SAY ANYTHING
TO GET SOME
SNATCH, WON'T
YA IRA?

ANYTHING
FOR
SNATCH

UH HUM I
REALLY DON'T
HAVE TIME
FOR THIS

WH OH,
THAT'S
OKAY

GET THE SPARE
SO WE CAN WRAP
THIS UD!

DON'T BE A
PUD, IRA GO
GET IT

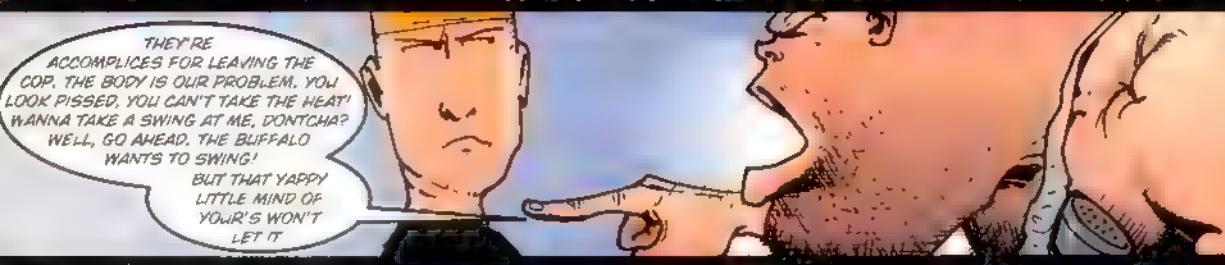
YOU LOOK
NERVOUS
KID.

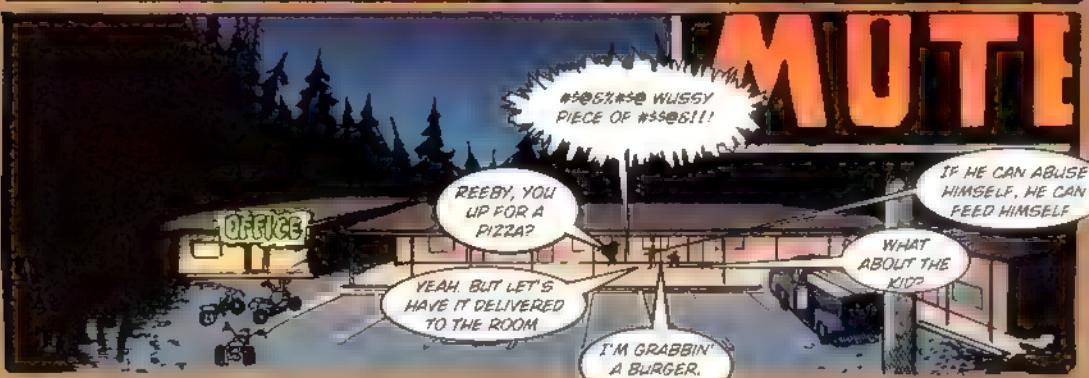
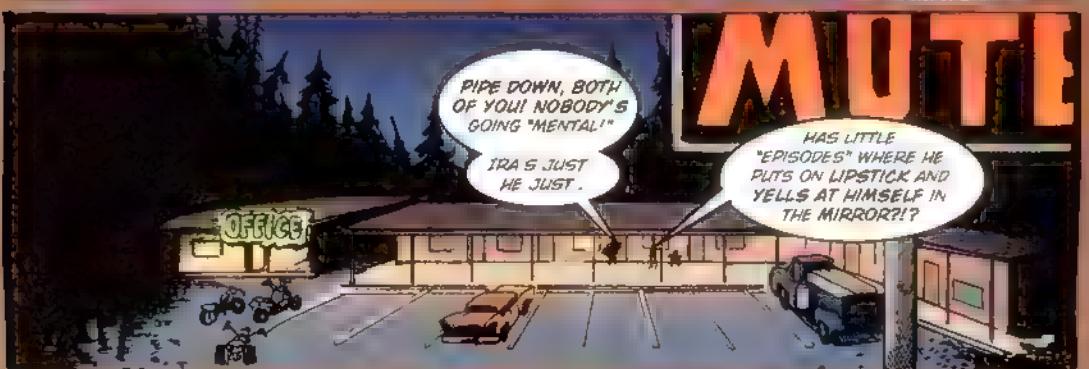
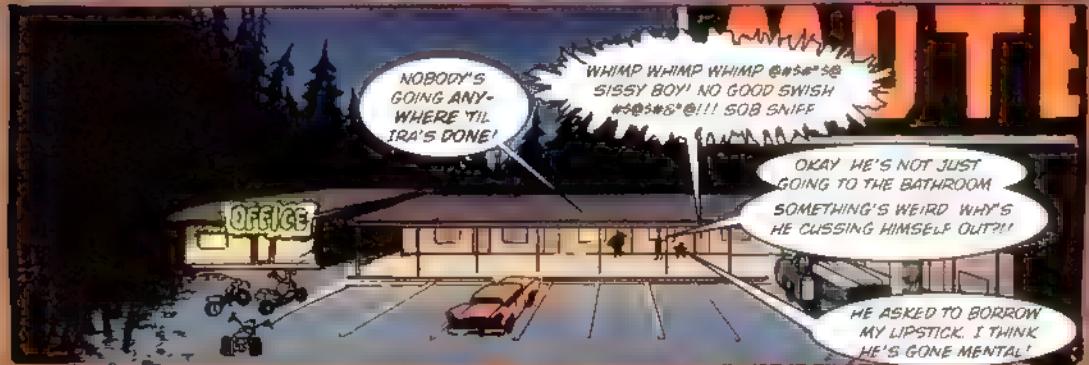
YOU TWO
STAY HERE



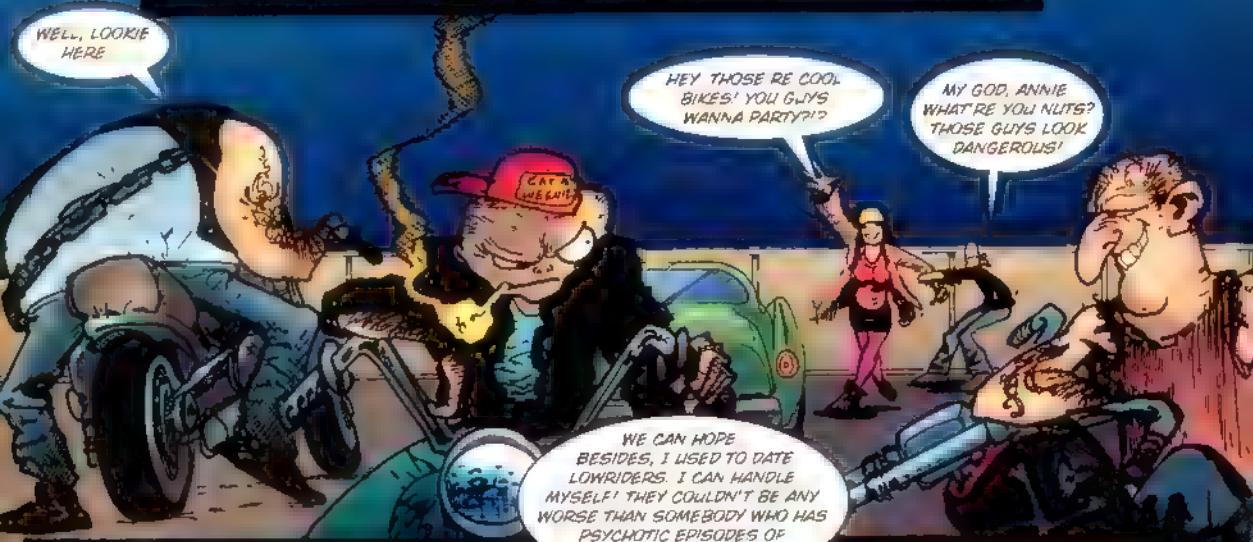








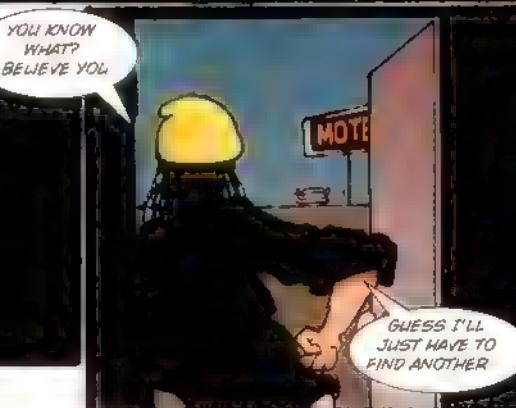
Broadminded Will not get you laid











50...

THIS SHOULD WORK
DON'T WORRY,
CHARLEY YOU PICKED
THE RIGHT GUY FOR
THE JOB.

THAT'S IT
KEEP
GOIN'

C'MON DON'T
STOP, NOW KEEP
SINKING

YOU KNOW
WHAT THAT'S
PROBABLY GOOD ENOUGH
WHO COMES OUT HERE
ANYWAY?

SHOOT! MAYBE THIS IS
WHAT CHARLEY MEANT -
IGNORING A PROBLEM AND HOPING
IT WILL GO AWAY. SUBMERGING MY
UGLY, SHADY INSTINCTS.
BUT THAT'S A METAPHOR.

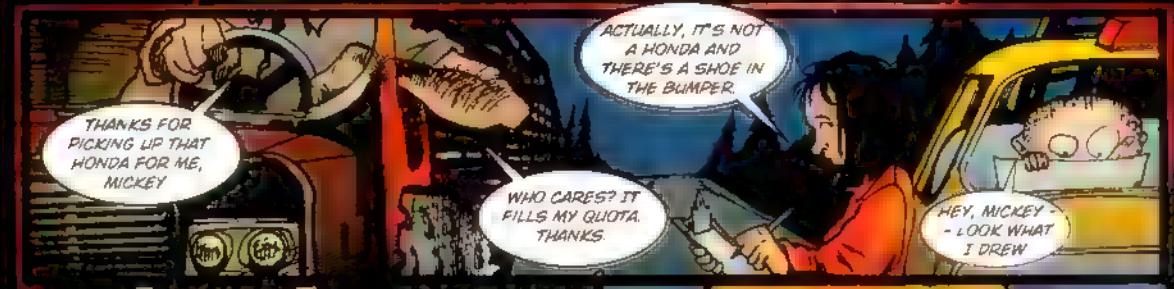
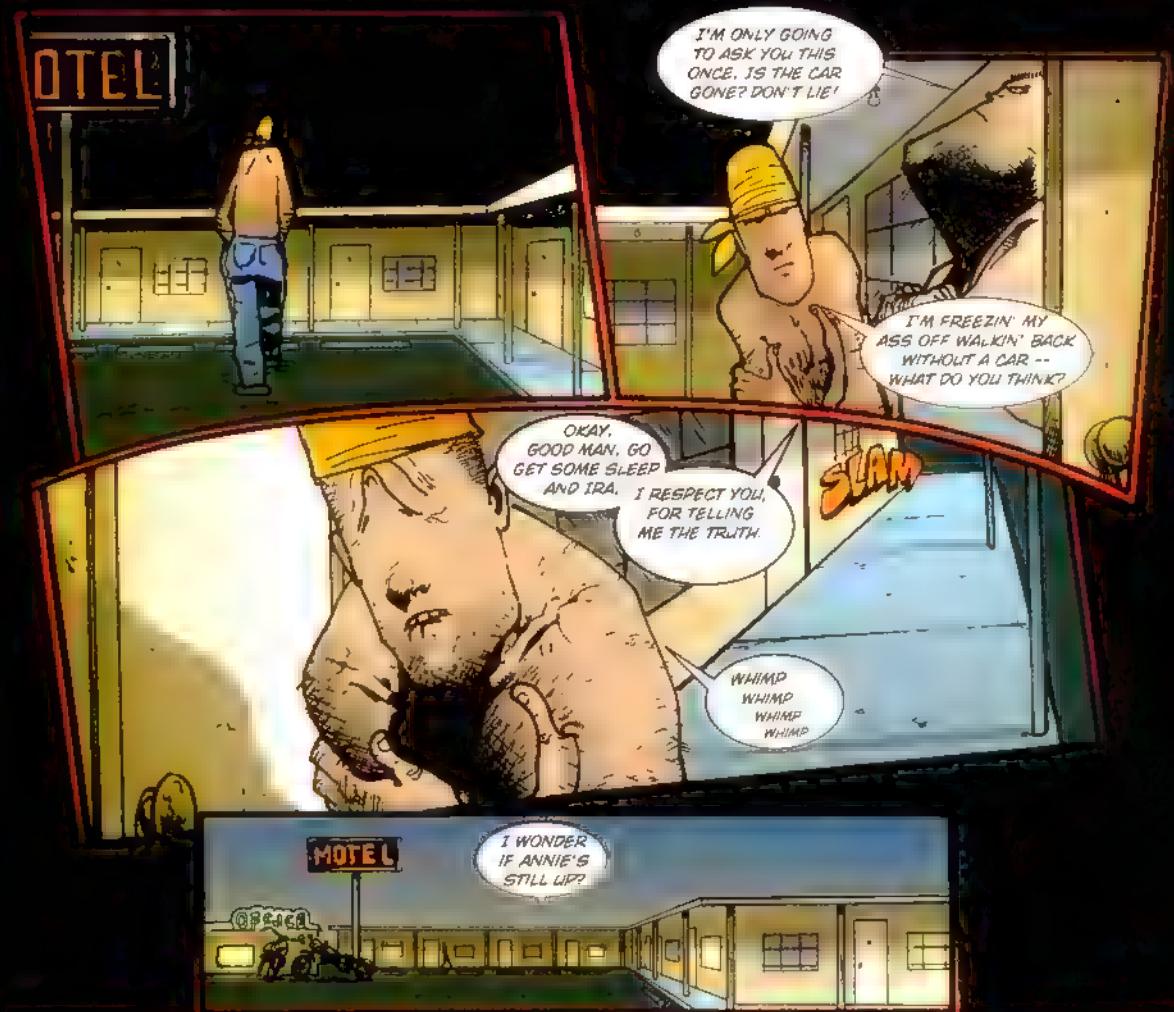
AND THIS
IS A CAR.

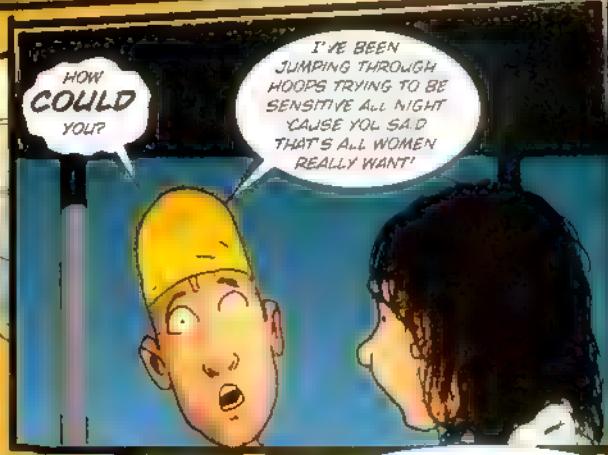
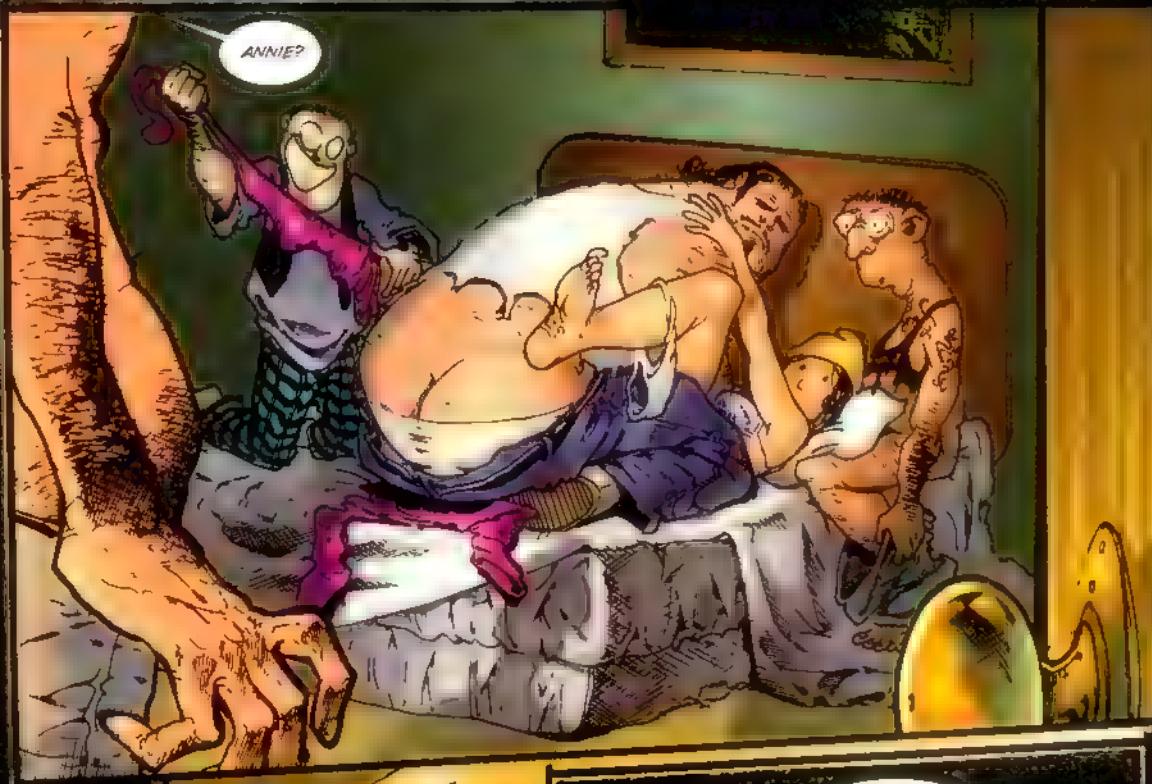
MICKEY'S
TOW

OKAY
DAD.

DAD THE ONLY CAR
SEE OUT HERE IS SOME
OLD CLUNKER WITH A SHOE
IN THE --

WELL THAT MUST
BE IT! BRING 'ER IN,
MICKEY!





HEY! I WOULDN'T BE THE ONLY PERSON WHO'S MOUTH SAID ONE THING AND BODY SAID ANOTHER. YOU MADE OUT LIKE SOME TOUGH GUY WITH COOL WHEELS. JUST TO GET LAID BUT IT WAS ALL TALK.

I'M SORRY IF YOU GOT HURT, BUT YOU HURT YOURSELF. CHARLEY'S RIGHT, YOU DON'T NEED SENSITIVITY! YOU'RE DROWNING IN SENSITIVITY. YOU NEED TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF. DON'T BLAME ME IF I WASN'T AROUND YOU'D FIND SOMEONE ELSE'S FEET TO GROVEL AT. TRUST ME. I KNOW

WHAT YOU NEED IS A @#\$% SPINE! I'M SORRY, BUT THERE IT IS. GOODBYE

YAP, YAP
YAP

EXACTLY,
I USE GUYS
LIKE YOU USE
WOMEN, TO
GET WHAT
WE WANT

NOW THANK
ME FOR
BREAKING
YOUR HEART AND
OPENING YOUR
EYES

THANK YOU.

HEY, YOU
WANT A SPINE?
THAT'S MY ROOM
AND I WANT
ALL OF YOU

OUT

LOOK,
YOU GUYS MAY BE BIGGER,
BUT I STILL WANT
YOU OUT, NOW...
OR I CALL THE COPS!

HE'S NOT
WORTH IT

WE WERE
LEAVIN' ANYWAYS.
C'MON BABE

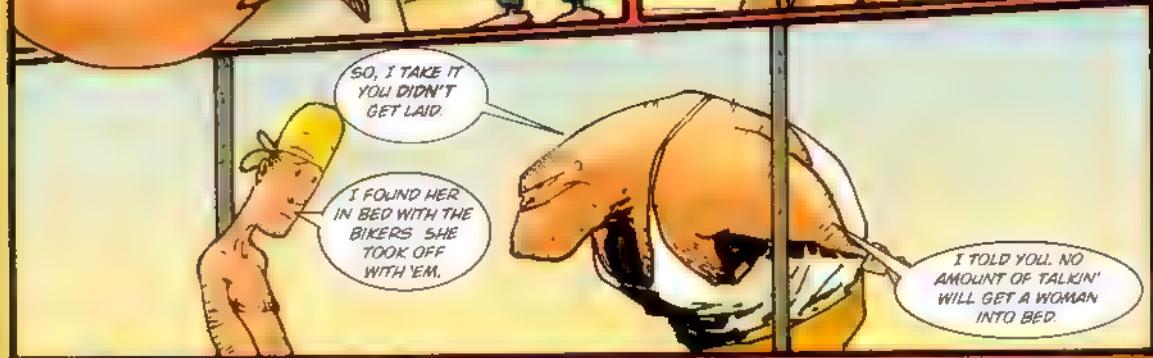
WOW IRA, THAT
WAS COOL!

NOW,
THAT'S WHO I
THOUGHT I'D MET
IN THE BAR
GOOD BYE IRA.

CRAP!
CHARLEY WILL LOVE
THIS. NOT ONLY
DIDN'T I TALK HER
INTO BED, BUT
I'M ALSO...

LOCKED
OUT





REEBY'S WAS
A HOOKER?

ALL THIS TIME, YOU'VE
BEEN TREATING ME LIKE
GARBAGE FOR LOSING OUR
CONTEST -- AND YOU
CHEATED WITH A HOOKER?
YOU PAID FOR IT!!!
THAT'S NOT FAIR!

WELL, MAYBE IF
YOU'D PAID FOR IT,
YOU'D GOTTEN
SOME BY NOW!

SCREW
YOU, FAT
BOY!!!

OKAY! THAT'S IT!
C'MON, LET'S GO!
RIGHT HERE!!!

NOW, YOU'RE
SHOWIN' SOME
NUTS. GO AHEAD!

I WOULDN'T EVEN BE
IN THIS MESS IF IT WASN'T FOR
YOU! YOU'RE EVERYTHING I HATE,
CHARLEY. CRUDE, IGNORANT,
RACIST, SEXIST, FAT, HAIRY,
CLUMSY .. AND YOU DON'T
CLEAN YOUR FINGERNAILS
TO BOOT!

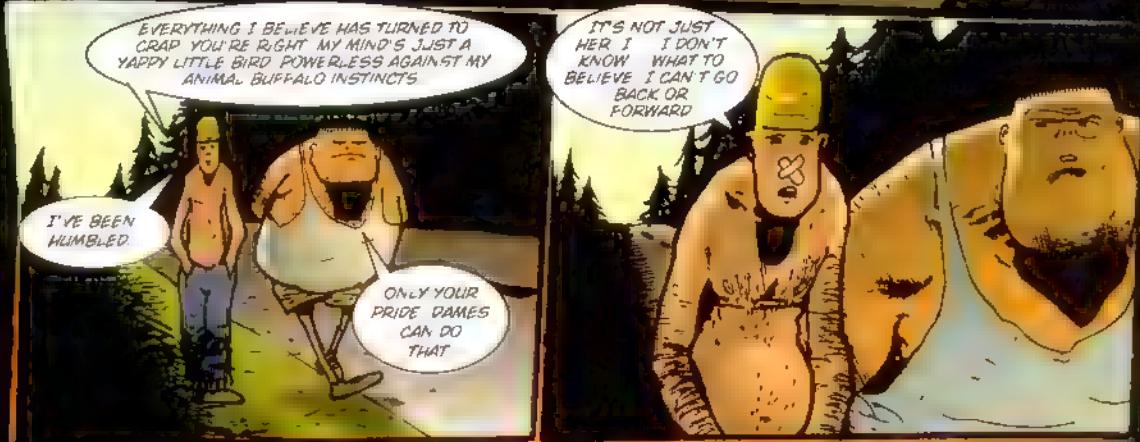
YEAH, GO
AHEAD! TRY IT -
I DARE YOU.

BOY YOU'RE JUST
ASKIN' FOR A GOOD
BOP, AREN'T YA?

MOTEL

YOU KNOW, I
WOULD'VE CALMED
DOWN

I WANTED TO
GET IT IN
BEFORE
YOU DID.





HEADlines

Send letters to: "HEADlines" 4363 Hazel Avenue, Suite 1-285, Fair Oaks, California, 95628 (nghtime@aol.com).

We made it to FOM #2! And we even got enough letters to make a real letter column with a real title. By the way, we are indebted to one heckuva smart fan fella for the name, "HEADlines," but we lost his address. So if he would be so kind as to mail it to us, we'll send him some excellent Maxx goodies for his brilliance. Don't pretend to be him—we'll know.

So here we go again, another FOM. Only this time it's Ira and Charley instead of Mickey and Dude. Weird—I see more similarities than differences. Dude and Ira are dreamers; Mickey and Charley are realists. Someday I'll have to write a story with 3 people and break my pattern (sigh)...

Anyway, what do you think? I know the story's only half over—Ira still has no idea what a "real man" is, only that everything he thought a man was was wrong. Charley's advice seems close to the truth, even though he's a boorish clod. Ira can't go back to his old way, but he can't go Charley's way either. (Let alone than damn body in the trunk! What's that a metaphor for—you tell me!)

In case you haven't noticed, FOM is shaping up to be for older readers, while Maxx can continue (other than this *Gone* stuff) in the lighter vein it has been going. "Broadminded" will conclude in FOM 3.

We need more euphemisms for Charley - the kind you wouldn't say in front of your mother. We will print the names of those which we use in the next issue.

Hey Sam,

How'ya doin'? I'm just great because I've just read FOM #1. Once again, my money couldn't have been better spent (unless it was spent on my family or for paying utilities, etc.) Anyhow, I really thought it was cool how you took the artist's "unwritten rule," that a comic cover should clue you into what you're gonna read inside, to the next level and actually made the cover the intro page, the beginning.

Anyway, looking forward to many more issues of both your books. Until then, I'll be reading the "typical physical jeopardy crap."

Amado Rodriguez, Jr.
Milwaukee, WI

As opposed to our "atypical emotional jeopardy crap."

Dear Sam Kieth,

Should FOM have its own letter column? Why not? Publish whatever shows up and keep going.

I like FOM. You've made the 48 pages look almost as tentative as Dude Japan's crayon dreams. Congratulations, it's a splendid venture, using many of those eclectic combinations of realism and cartoonism to express the feelings that, by the way, remind me of Carson McCuller's "Ballad of the Sad Cafe" in literature, and much of Dr. Seuss' children's books in plain ol' down-home communication. I'm curious about how much of this "anti-perfectionism" in your stories is biographical or autobiographical. But that's your business.

Sincerely,
J. R. Hasek
Knoxville, TN

Hey Sam,

FOM was sensational! As great as The Maxx is, it was wonderful to see an (almost) unrelated story. The situation, the characters, the low sticker price—it was all suberb! I especially liked the references to Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, Warhol, and Oldenburg.

Paul Silveria
Vancouver, WA

Dear Sam,

FOM is the reason I'm writing. I followed your material in CRITTERS and later on saw the versions of Maxx on MTV. That led me to picking up the book. It's enjoyable, but I feel your peak has been reached with the FRIENDS book.

It's well done and very human that Dude and Mickey don't have all the answers, that they still have a long way to go before they figure it out. Of course the propane tank really drew me in. My father worked for Wonder Bread for 40 or so years, and seeing the imagery of the white rectangular object with the multicolored balloons is always a comforting symbol for me, just as it seems to be for Dude and Mickey.

Something else I like in the book (as well as in Maxx) is that these people have human bodies and faces. The hair isn't always combed, the clothes need washing, and nobody is an Adonis.

Sincerely,

Mike Curtis

Conway, AR

Sam and Co.,

FOM was especially good because it felt more like a really good short story with pictures than a comic. I'd like to suggest another way that you could further extend the comic boundaries that you've been stretching with The Maxx (The Maxx=esoteric sandwich; FOM= interpersonal relationships). I think it'd be cool if you had one of those Write-a-Comic contests, where you'd give the winner(s) a bunch of neat stuff, and you'd have the stories they wrote drawn up and printed in FOM or Maxx or something.

Sincerely,

Mike Cecconi

Little Falls, NY

Thanx. I really believe that comics aren't just for kids, but to get more adults to read them, we have to have more adult-oriented stories, as well as characters that we can all relate to, right?

So whatdaya think—should we have a contest for writers for a change? It seems like artists get all the attention in comics. Hmm...

O Dearest of Sams,

FOM was the best issue since, well, since #23! Seriously, though, it was fantastic! I loved seeing Dave/Maxx again, even if for only a few seconds. This could easily become a movie (knowwhatimean, nudge, nudge), and if you do end at issue 30 (I doubt it—you've got too many good ideas!) this could easily become a replacement series.

Nathanial Long

Nobody's gonna replace anybody. They'll just run parallel to each other.

Sam,

Just finished FOM without a gram of clue as to what to expect.

Once again you've done it, you've managed somehow to draw a character or given me one (to say the least) to relate to, to a T. With the exception of Dude's appearance and male ego, I personally found him to mirror myself, as many a family member and friend has forced me to realize. I too have had a "Mickey" (of another name) that I still love deeply. I see many of the same attributes, characteristics, and thoughts (as well as feelings) in Dude, Mickey, Maxx and Julie Winters. Even Mr. Gone has something I can relate to.

Thank you.

Christopher Galante

Ocean City, NJ

Dear Sam,

I bought your new book, FOM, and I liked it a lot. However, the one thing I didn't like about it was the name. By calling this book "Friends of Maxx," you rob it of its own identity. Your new book is good and does not have to ride on the coat tails of Maxx. What if "Sin City" was called "Friends of Daredevil," or if "Stray Bullets" was called "Friends of Valiant?" A book may be great but it will always be judged by its cover (it's true), and right now yours blatantly screams "Will Never Be Able to Step Out of the Shadow of Maxx." Maybe #2 can be "Friends of Dude."

Anyway, regardless, thanks for doing quality work.

Sincerely yours,

Chris Gennaro

East Brunswick, NJ

I thought a lot about what you said. It's a great compliment that you think FOM can stand on its own. Hmm. What DO I think about this? Somebody tell me, quick!

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I've just finished reading FOM #1, and happen to be home with a fractured knee-cap, so I thought I'd write. At first I wasn't sure what to expect. I should have known better. In 21-some issues of The Maxx, you made us care about Dave, Julie, Sara, and their relationships with one another. In three issues you've given us Steve and Norbert to care about. In just one issue, you made us see Mr. Gone from an entirely different point of view. The second-to-last page of that issue, where Artemis asks his daughter if

she tried to stop the thugs from killing him, defines pathos. The pacing and lighting were brilliant.

FOM is equally impressive. What I feel draws people to The Maxx is the characters. As I said, we care about Dave, Julie, Sara, Norbert, and Steve. It is ultimately relationships that define us as human beings. A person who has never come into contact with another human being could not exist. First of all, someone would have had to have given birth to them. Secondly, even if they were then completely abandoned, this would become the basis of their relationship with the rest of the world and define them as an individual. We are all children, siblings, classmates, co-workers, spouses, parents, neighbors, customers, etc. As Donne put it, "No man is an island."

This is one of the sources of the power of your storytelling. The Maxx is, on one level, about relationships. The relationship between objective and subjective realities, the relationship between people and reality, and the relationships between people who may or may not agree on what reality is. The same can be said of FOM. Dude and Mickey have, as do we all, unique points of view of reality. It is when and where these points of view overlap or collide that we have the makings of drama, comedy, tragedy, romance, and adventure.

Besides being fun to read and beautiful to look at, your work reminds us of the fact that we have much more in common than we have keeping us apart. You stimulate our hearts and minds, asking us to give a damn. I think that this helps make the world a better place. Once again, Mr. Kieth, thank you.

Sincerely,
Brian R. Dixon

Dear Sam I Am,

I want to convey my thanks for FOM #1. You definitely hit some spots close to home as far as one recently-failed relationship goes (guess who). Was that story auto-biographical? It seems to ring so heartfelt. Anyway, great job as always

Clint Stone
South Bend, OR

Why does everybody think this story is auto-biographical? I weigh 400 lbs, have hair all over my body, and never have any problems with woman. (Now where did I put those crayons...)

Dear Mr. Kieth,

Will anyone from FOM ever appear in the regular series?

Faithful Maxthead,
Mike Ruiz
South Pasadena, CA

Hey, It's a small world. Who know who lurks where...

Dear Sam,

It's late at night and I have school tomorrow and I shouldn't be up this late 'cause I'll never get up in the morning but it seems that inspiration always strikes at night and I can't get to sleep without writing something. That may be the longest sentence I have ever written.

Anyway, I just need to express how wonderful I thought the first issue of FOM was. I have been reading comics for only a few years, but my brother happens to be a collector so I have read probably 20 years' worth of comics in that short time. Most of them involve mediocre art and even worse writing. But every once in a while you run into something astounding. Your work and that of Bill Messner-Loebs has been extraordinary. I love the way you draw arms. When I went to a theater camp this summer, I did a monologue of Maxx #4 (about Sara and the gun). I feel very close to her. I can't seem to understand your ability to illustrate female characters so well. Most women in comics are there simply to stick out their chests and make pretty background pictures [the men, too, in fact]. As an aspiring feminist, it means a lot to me that you portray women as you would portray a man.

Anyway, FOM was fantastic. It took me a while to get through it, but who cares—it was worth it. It is so refreshing to see in comics, a medium that so desperately wants to be taken seriously, a book without the prerequisite large, hulking superhero in tights, a thing that is about as silly as you can get. In an industry that is so testosterone-charged, it was really a risk to write something with such a mainstream distribution in such an unconventional way. Parts of it were profound. Most of it I won't even get until, like, the thirteenth time I read it. It was simple and straightforward and human and if it counts for anything at all, I really, really liked it.

Sincerely,
Gretchen Gueguen
Kittanning, PA

More than you know, Gretchen. More than you know.

a Landstander scan
for z-cult fm



"I just wanted to stand on Land."